

RECORD OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ladislaus B. Dombrowski Board Room
John A. Hannah Building
608 West Allegan
Lansing, Michigan

October 5, 2005
9:30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman
Mrs. Kathleen N. Straus, President
Mr. John C. Austin, Vice President
Mrs. Carolyn L. Curtin, Secretary
Mrs. Marianne Yared McGuire, Treasurer
Mrs. Nancy Danhof, NASBE Delegate
Mrs. Elizabeth W. Bauer
Mr. Reginald Turner
Mrs. Eileen Lappin Weiser
Ms. Sue C. Carnell, representing Governor Jennifer M. Granholm,
ex officio

Also Present: Mr. Daniel Schab, 2005-2006 Michigan Teacher of the Year

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Flanagan called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTION OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS,
DEPARTMENT STAFF, AND GUESTS

Mrs. Eileen Hamilton, State Board Executive, introduced members of the State Board of Education, Department staff, and guests.

III. PERSONAL PRIVILEGE – MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN

Mr. Flanagan said in an effort to improve the flow of the meeting, Board members will be able to ask one question at a time so all members have an opportunity to be involved in the discussion.

Mr. Flanagan reported the Department is currently working to resolve problems with Pearson Educational Measurement, the printing contractor for Michigan Educational Assessment Program testing. He said several shipments of testing materials to local school districts have been incomplete or inaccurate. He said a top-level MEAP administrator was sent immediately to the contractor's site assessing the situation, and helping to correct the problems. Mr. Flanagan said there are financial penalties specified in the contract that may be levied against the

contractor. He said the testing window for school districts will be adjusted. Dr. Jeremy Hughes, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, said it is a shipment and inventory problem not related to Department time lines in getting materials to the contractor.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discussion Regarding Charge to Michigan Department of Education, Time Line, and Board's Next Steps

The following individual presented:

- Mr. Michael P. Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Mr. Flanagan said currently the only state-required course for high school graduation is civics. He said local districts have additional course requirements, but there is a need to communicate throughout the state and nation that Michigan requires more than civics. He said Michigan has a tradition of local control and it is important to find a way to honor that. He said another important factor is the opportunity for courses in the arts, technology, career technology, and foreign languages. He said the results of a high school graduation requirement survey will be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr. Flanagan said Dr. Hughes is meeting with representatives of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Oregon, and Indiana to review the process and lessons learned when those states reviewed graduation requirements and state policy.

Mr. Flanagan said Dr. Yvonne Caamal Canul will provide Board members with a document titled "High School Content Expectations – Timeline" that details tentative dates for review and approval of proposed standards.

Board member comments included:

1. It is not enough for students to take courses, they must demonstrate mastery of course objectives. It is possible to make sure students have achieved mastery without taking a traditional classroom course. The Board should be very specific regarding standards, curriculum, and assessment, so that it will be very clear to the public.
2. There are many interpretations of curriculum and there is a need to define the meaning of curriculum, and the role of the State Board and local districts. This must be clearly communicated to the public.

3. It will be a balancing act taking into account current conditions in Michigan, what works in other states, and the educational requirements needed to ensure that Michigan positions itself as a state that provides a highly educated workforce. Course work in high school is a major factor toward ensuring that students enter college without the need for remediation.

Mr. Flanagan said a proposal will be presented at the November 15, 2005, State Board of Education meeting.

V. PERSONAL PRIVILEGE – JEREMY HUGHES

Dr. Jeremy Hughes, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, introduced Dr. Gary VanKampen, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Lansing Community College. Dr. VanKampen is an executive on loan to the Department of Education to assist with the postsecondary portion of the recommendations from the Lieutenant Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth. Dr. Hughes thanked the Governor's office for making the arrangements.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

- B. Discussion Regarding Research on What a High School Graduate Needs to Know and Be Able To Do

The following individual presented:

- Ms. Diane McMillan, High School Consultant, Michigan Department of Education

Ms. McMillan's comments focused on what high school graduates should know, be able to do, and understand by graduation for postsecondary and workplace readiness. She said this means college, work, technical school, and lifelong learning.

Ms. McMillan said, in addition to mastery of academics, the development of character traits such as ethical behavior, perseverance, discipline, leadership, and responsibility, should be valued.

The Board document contained learning standards from national organizations, high school graduate profiles, and mission statements.

Board member comments included:

1. need for teachers to be able to use technology effectively, and address the technology gap between school districts;

2. determine if schools, businesses, and associations have parallel beliefs about requirements for postsecondary success;
 3. develop standards and assessments for basic skills and proficiencies such as resourcefulness and adaptability; and
 4. precisely state what students need to be able to achieve.
- C. Discussion Regarding High School Initiative – Fostering Innovation

The following individuals presented:

- Dr. Jeremy Hughes, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
- Ms. Carol Wolenberg, Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Hughes said he and Dr. Wolenberg asked staff to research what the Department of Education can do to support high schools that want to re-design elements of their program. He said this included asking what authority the Department has to waive certain statutes, rules, and regulations. He said the Department does not have authority to waive statute, except in areas where it is specified. He said the Department has authority to waive administrative rules promulgated by the Michigan Department of Education, however not rules promulgated by another Department.

Dr. Hughes said the Board has the authority to define year round school and alternative education.

Board member comments included:

1. help communities understand the world is different and rapidly changing;
2. bolster classes in middle school since those students need to be prepared to enter high school;
3. emphasize Board leadership by proposing changes in legislation and administrative rules that foster innovation;
4. explore opportunities such as grants, networking with communities, and collaboration with associations; and
5. waivers can be seen as opportunities for innovation or loopholes.

D. Discussion Regarding Status of High School Graduation Requirement Survey

The following individuals presented:

- Dr. Jeremy Hughes, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
- Ms. MaryAlice Galloway, Special Assistant to the Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Hughes said the Board requested data on the high school graduation requirements that local districts have established. He said a survey instrument was created and e-mailed to local districts, and summary data gathered is included in the Board document. He said the data will inform discussion for the recommendation to the Governor of proposed graduation requirements.

Dr. Hughes thanked the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals for their assistance in launching the survey.

Ms. Galloway said the survey response rate was 45%, and it was a representative sample of local graduation requirements throughout the state.

Survey conclusions included the following:

Two hundred ninety one (291) of the 293 survey respondents indicated that they had specific course requirements for one or more courses for graduation and the requirements varied. Graduation requirements generally met a common pattern of 4 years of English language arts, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of social studies and 2 years of science. In contrast, 113 of the respondents indicated they required no courses in the arts and 183 indicated they do not require a world language.

The number of credits required for graduation fell into a range from 18-45 and clustered around 21-29. In the survey a credit was defined as a course that met for a whole year. The number of credits required for graduation appears to cover a broad range, but some school districts use block scheduling in the high school and other credit earning configurations that produce 40-45 credit opportunities. The data seem to indicate that a substantial number of districts still use the Carnegie Unit method of counting credits.

Board member comments included:

1. thank you to districts for their candor in responding to the survey, which assists Board members in making informed decisions;
2. review transcript studies indicating whether or not students are choosing to exceed the requirements;
3. need data at the end of high school and the end of higher education;
4. inform the public of findings, so the reason for high school redesign becomes apparent;
5. American Diploma Project survey of students in institutions of higher education indicates that students wished they would have been strongly encouraged or required to pursue rigorous high school courses, so that remedial college courses would not be necessary;
6. utilize services of a graduate student to fill in the gaps and determine what is required by local districts that did not respond to the survey; and
7. need to establish rigorous course requirements to avoid reduced expectations of graduates, and lower grade point averages.

E. Report on Major Themes of Student Focus Groups

The following individual presented:

- Dr. Jay Newman, Superintendent, St. Joseph Intermediate School District;
- Mr. Kent Roberts, National Civility Center

Mr. Newman said student summits regarding school reform were held in January through April 2005. He said the summits were conducted by the National Civility Center in conjunction with the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators. The document presented to the Board includes summary comments from the student summits.

Mr. Newman said the students represented a cross-section of the school population, and their comments were candid.

Student comments were grouped in the areas of:

1. connection between students and teachers;
2. content that is challenging and has a relationship to students now and in the future;
3. methods of learning that are most beneficial for students;
4. learning context that is a powerful relationship between teachers, students, and the content – including physical and emotional safety; and
5. choice in their selection of courses.

Board member comments included:

1. students are requesting rigor, relevance, and relationships, and they must be provided;
2. important to build a strong foundation from early childhood;
3. foreign language instruction needed in elementary and middle schools;
4. make sure “what” is aligned with “how” in a rich hands-on learning environment;
5. it is the Board’s responsibility to determine a curriculum all students should have, and the responsibility of schools to determine the delivery of the curriculum in a creative manner;
6. as professional standards for teachers are developed, learning styles should inform lifelong learning not just learning in kindergarten through grade 12.

VII. RECESS

The Board recessed the Committee of the Whole at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 1:35 p.m.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

F. Panel Discussion Regarding What Students are Expected To Know and Be Able To Do Following High School Graduation

Panel

- Mr. Mike Schmidt, Ford Foundation
- Ms. Pamela Horne, Admissions Director, Michigan State University
- Mr. Andrew Mazzara, President, Henry Ford Community College
- Mr. Jim Ballard, Chair, The Education Alliance of Michigan and Executive Director, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals;
- Mr. Rick Lane, President, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators and Superintendent, Saginaw Intermediate School District

Panelists shared their perspectives with regard to what a successful high school graduate should know and be able to do.

Mr. Schmidt's comments included:

1. 21st century knowledge and critical thinking skills as well as academics are required in today's fast paced world that is rapidly changing;
2. foster innovation and creativity at the high school level; and
3. standards and assessment are not enough – content must be linked with pedagogy and structure in a systematic manner.

Ms. Horne's comments included:

1. need for statewide media campaign as done in other states to encourage enrollment and preparation for college;
2. need statewide data detailing what high school students must do to decrease remediation in postsecondary education, keep postsecondary options open, and increase earning power;
3. students need critical thinking, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills; the ability to be inquisitive, discern credibility, and accept criticism; and the opportunity to fail and then succeed; and
4. postsecondary education is an investment and should not be viewed as a cost.

Mr. Mazzara's comments included:

1. rigorous high school preparatory curriculum framework for all students;
2. assessment that measures student progress by grade level toward meeting the standards and expectations of the high school preparatory curriculum framework;
3. development of policies to foster and reward communication, engagement, and collaboration between high school and college educators aimed at facilitating matriculation of adequately prepared students into college;
4. through State Board of Education policies, create debate among local school boards and communities about their vision for progressive high school education; and
5. communicate to Michigan citizens the importance of continuing one's education beyond high school, and likely throughout one's life, in order to have opportunities for better jobs, satisfying careers, and a decent quality of life.

Mr. Ballard's comments included:

Mr. Ballard presented a position statement dated October 5, 2005, from The Education Alliance of Michigan that was unanimously approved by all 17 member organizations.

"The Education Alliance of Michigan strongly supports a state required course of study to prepare students for postsecondary success and readiness for the world of work (for example: four years of grade-level English including literature, writing, reasoning, logic and communication skills; four years of math, including Algebra I and II, geometry data analysis, and statistics; and increased rigor for science, social studies and other areas).

The state should develop high school standards that clearly describe the knowledge and skills and the level of rigor expected of required courses to ensure that educators and the public have a common understanding of what is essential for students to learn. These standards should be aligned with the K-8 Grade Level Content Expectations and the knowledge and skills required for college and workplace success.

The Education Alliance of Michigan expresses a strong sense of urgency that an action plan be developed, which identifies the issues and timelines that should be addressed to develop the required course of study."

Mr. Ballard urged clarification of the meaning of postsecondary education to be earning a certificate of value, not exclusively a four-year college baccalaureate degree.

Mr. Lane's comments included:

1. *Rigor* – Develop high standards accompanied by high expectations for student success. Support systems to aid success such as tutoring, group study sessions, facilitated study sessions, on-line help desks, etc., must be available to all students. The system must include fair assessments, both formative and summative, that are competency based. The time and place for learning should be variable and flexible. Credit should be based on mastery of standards and not linked to required seat time or sources of learning. All content should be age-appropriate and articulated with post-secondary programs and content in middle and elementary school;
2. *Relevance* – The system should provide opportunities for the curriculum to be taught in a variety of contexts (i.e., math with career and technical education programs) including project-based and theme-based learning. Learning experiences should readily aid students in relating content knowledge to their post high school personal and vocational aspirations;
3. *Relationships* – The system must provide a means for every student to be meaningfully connected to both a caring adult and a peer group. A strong emphasis on citizenship and “the American Way” should be integral focal points of the system’s social architecture. The system must believe that all students can succeed and must develop a “whatever it takes” attitude to ensure student success. Each student should have an individual learning plan that addresses academic, personal and vocational growth. The individual learning plan must also provide honest feedback and contain appropriate interventions to assure student success; and
4. need for universal access to a statewide system of early childhood education.

Mr. Austin and Mr. Turner left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

- A. Ms. Andrea Yokich, Ingham Intermediate School District, Mason, Michigan. Ms. Yokich, representing Association of Michigan School Counselors, provided comments regarding the role of school counselors in statewide curriculum delivery.
- B. Madelin Milidonis-Fritz, 7971 West Opal Lake, Gaylord, Michigan 49735. Ms. Milidonis-Fritz, President, Michigan Art Education Association, commented on fine arts standards and benchmarks.
- C. Ms. Mary Monaghan, 3603 Sawgrass Circle, Lansing, Michigan 48911. Ms. Monaghan provided written remarks on bringing more teachers to the State Board table regarding school standards and high school reform. Ms. Monaghan had to leave the meeting before the time of public comment.

X. COMMENTS BY STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- A. Newspaper Articles – Mrs. Eileen Weiser

Mrs. Weiser distributed the following articles from the September 25, 2005, edition of the *Detroit News*: “Blending all subjects broadens educations,” and “New programs incorporate subjects left behind.” She said it is the first time she has seen coverage in the media on the use of an arts and humanities integrated curriculum in elementary school leading to adequate yearly progress.

XI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Mrs. Weiser suggested a Board presentation during the October 11, 2005, meeting by Mr. Nolan Finley, Editorial Page Editor, *The Detroit News*, regarding the Survey of Young Adults, Ages 18-30, about their high school experience.

XII. FUTURE MEETING DATES

- A. October 11, 2005
- B. November 15, 2005
- C. December 13, 2005
- D. January 10, 2006

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn L. Curtin
Secretary